



An evaluation of the national youth leadership training program: Youth as change agents to narrow achievement gaps

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Summary

This presentation will report on a study of the National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) program in which students attend a weeklong camp and carry out a service-learning project to address the achievement gap in their school or community. Results showed significant gains in participants' identity development, knowledge of the achievement gap, and civic skills.

A survey was administered to 28 youth prior to the NYLT camp in 2010 and again after they had completed the school year and implemented their service-learning projects. Survey measures assessed the following outcomes:

- Academic and moral identity;
- Endorsement of student role behaviors in school that involve advocacy for equitable education;
- Knowledge of the achievement gap;
- Skills at taking action to address the achievement gap;
- Perceived teacher support for struggling students at their school;
- Perceived school climate; and
- Impacts on learning and personal growth.

In addition to outcomes, post-survey measures assessed aspects of the service-learning experience including quality and mentor support. Paired samples t-tests showed that NYLT youth made significant gains in their achievement identity, expressing increased agreement that traits such as being motivated and hard-working were an important part of their sense of self and influenced everyday activities. NYLT participants also increased significantly in moral identity, reporting increased agreement that traits such as being caring and generous were important to them. Little change occurred over time in NYLT participants' ratings of student role behaviors involving advocacy for educational equity. However, youth showed strong increases in their self-reported knowledge of the achievement gap and skills at addressing achievement gaps. Hierarchical linear regression analyses showed that, after controlling for pre-survey scores, the perceived quality of the service-learning experience significantly predicted NYLT participants' post-scores on academic identity, moral identity, and skills at addressing the achievement gap.

References

There were no references provided with this proposal.